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## THE PAN-THAI MOVEMENT

An assessment  
of the movement to reunite  
Thailand and its lost territories



August 1953

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, FE

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FROM : Chief, [REDACTED]

SUBJECT : Research Report

The Pan-Thai Movement

REFERENCES : (a) Memorandum, 22 May 1953, Request for  
Research Support, from Chief [REDACTED]

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Attached is a report on the history and current status of the Pan-Thai movement. The movement was a chauvinistic effort in the early 1940's to unite under one flag all peoples racially akin to the Thais. CIA, State and Defense Department materials were consulted in addition to published works of leading nationalistic Thai writers of the 1940's.

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## THE PAN-THAI MOVEMENT

### PROBLEM

To assess the history and current status of the Pan-Thai movement.

### SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

Because of the limited amount of material available, it has been possible to trace the movement back only as far as 1939.

 consulted CIA, State Department, Defense Department and Library of Congress materials, particularly the writings of leading nationalistic Thai writers of the early 1940's.

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THE PAN-THAI MOVEMENT

SUMMARY

Pan-Thaism, a movement for restoring to the Kingdom of Thailand the territories which Pan-Thaists claim the French and British took from Thailand by force, apparently is not dead, but neither is it an active movement now.

The name Thailand, adopted 14 years ago, is in itself an expression of Pan-Thaism. The name implies, in Thai thinking, a union of peoples racially or linguistically akin to the Siamese Thais.

The areas involved are Laos, Cambodia, part of the Shan States area of Burma and part of Malaya, which were lost during the period 1800-1909. Main target of Pan-Thaism, which was at its strongest in 1940, appears to have been the French territories. Thailand demanded that the French readjust the Thailand-Indochina border. These demands were ultimately arbitrated with the assistance of the Japanese, and negotiation of a treaty in 1941 which ceded portions of Indochina to Thailand quieted the movement. It is not certain if it has been revived.

The leading figures in the 1940 movement were Marshal Phibun Songgram, then premier of Thailand, and a writer and

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government official named Wichit Wathakan, who wrote many Pan-Thaist pamphlets.

The creation in early 1953 of a Thai Autonomous Region in Southern Yunnan by the Chinese Communists occasions a re-examination of the Pan-Thaist movement. Phibun and Wichit are still on the scene but they have not given any indications of Pan-Thaist thinking in the past few years, nor has any revival of Pan-Thaist activities been observed.

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## THE PAN-THAI MOVEMENT

### I. HISTORY OF THE PAN-THAI MOVEMENT

#### What is Pan-Thaism?

Pan-Thaism is a movement to restore to the Kingdom of Thailand the territories which Pan-Thaists claim were forcibly taken from Thailand by France and England.

#### What are the areas involved?

The areas claimed by the Pan-Thaists as having been stolen from Thailand are four, which were lost in seven stages: 1/

<u>Date</u>	<u>Country Lost To</u>	<u>Area</u>
1. 1800	Great Britain	Portion of the Kra Isthmus which is now part of Burma and the area around Penang, Malaya.
2. 1867	France	Eastern Cambodia and six coastal islands
3. 1888	France	Sipsong Chuthai
4. 1893	France	Left bank of the Mekong River
5. 1904	France	Right bank of the Mekong River opposite Luang Prabang and Pakse
6. 1907	France	Battembong, Siemrat and Srisophon

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Although references are often made to people of the Tai race\*

The chief complication and the questionable point in Pan-Thai

### The Movement Itself

Research discloses no formal Pan-Thai movement prior to

\* Note the two different words Thai and Tai. The former is used to



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many Siamese for many years prior to that date. It was at this point that change of name from Siam to Thailand was first proclaimed. The significance of this change is that, though the name Siam refers to the kingdom as it stood at that time, the name Thailand ("Muang Thai" in Siamese) meaning "land of the Thais" or "land of the free men," implies a state for all Tai peoples throughout Southeast Asia.

The movement, as developed in 1939-1940, had definite official sanction at all levels. The policy of Pan-Thaism was expressed by many high officials and in official government publications. The latter were mostly prepared by the Thailand government's Department of Publicity. One notable publication produced by this group was How Thailand Lost Her Territories to France, which included a series of maps showing a Thailand with borders including all territories now under French control, and the piecemeal loss of them. This same work reappeared as part of a larger document written by Wichit Wathakan (also spelled Vichitr Vadakarn), a holder of many high positions in the Thai government and Thai educational circles. The latter work was called Thailand's Case. Both works bitterly denounced "French aggression" and French violation of Thai soil.

These works by Wathakan, together with leaflets and books by other Thai writers of that period, dwell to a great extent on the subject of the Tai race and its components. All state, without question,

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that the Siamese (Thais), Shans, Laotians and several smaller tribes in Northern Laos are Tais. Their writings reveal a conviction that contradiction of that enunciation is impossible.

They are far more cautious in talking about the Cambodians. Because of the widespread use of the term Khmer, denoting a different and ancient race, in referring to the Cambodians, as in the current Khmer Issarak movement in Cambodia, Thai writers have had to go to great length to justify their claims that the Cambodians are Tais. The following are a few examples of statements along these lines. From Wathakan's book Thai-Khmer Racial Relations: "We Thais in Thailand have never tried to delete the name 'Cambodia,' but we affirm that the Cambodians and Thais belong to the same race. The Cambodians of today are not ancient Khmers, because Thai blood has insinuated into their veins." In Wathakan's book Thailand's Case he cites from Dodd's book, The Tai Race - Elder Brother of the Chinese, that Tai blood started to mix with Khmer blood in about the fifth century. He further asserts that the name Khmer is obsolete, since present-day Cambodians have at least ninety per cent Tai blood. He also dwells a bit on the derivation of the name Cambodia, which comes from a word "cambudja" meaning "born in the Gold Peninsula," the latter being an ancient literary term for the Indo-China Peninsula. Others have made similar statements.

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Wathakan cites the following statement of the Thai race from Aymonier's book Le Cambodge, in his work, Thailand's Case: "The great ethnical family of the Tai or Thai, the name meaning, wrongly or rightly, 'the Free, Freeman,' contains numerous branches which are closely related, chiefly from the linguistic point of view. The principal branches of this family are the Shan, the Lao or Laotians, the Lu, the Phuthai and the Siamese. Long before our era this family was to swarm the highlands of Yunnan or Eastern Tibet, follow the slope of the waterpaths, occupy several valleys of Southern China and pour out to the South in powerful influx covering almost all the plains of Indo-China. Driving back into the forest and upon the mountains the weak aborigine people, the Thai only left but little coasts and large deltas to the civilized nations whom we know by the name of Annamite, Cham, Cambodian, Malay, Peguan and Burman."

The above statement is typical of those made or cited by leading chauvinistic writers of the early forties. The trend of all these writings, which were officially sanctioned, is very much the same. The key theme was the recovery of the "territories lost to France." Some extremists called for the cession of all Laos and Cambodia. Other, more conservative elements asked merely for rectification of boundaries along the deep channel or thalweg of the

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Mekong River and cession of several smaller regions. Few, if any, dared make claims on the Shan or Malay areas. The reason was clear. Britain was then undergoing the blitz, but was still strong; France was a divided and defeated nation, led by the puppet of Vichy, Marshal Petain. Since Japan, an Axis partner, had supported Thailand's claims, to divide the Thais and the French, the Thais reasoned that Germany would bring pressure upon Vichy to yield. 3/ This proved to be the case. Some have claimed that the idea of making claims on France originated with the Japanese, who later acted as mediator in negotiation of the treaty ceding portions of Indo-China to Thailand, and that the Japanese incited riots and demonstrations for achieving this objective.

Key leaders and key organizations in the Pan-Thai movement during the early 1940's were top-level and government-sponsored. Both behind the scenes and in the open, the key figure was Marshal Luang Phibun Songgram, then, and now again, premier. He was leader and spokesman for the movement.

Wichit Wathakan was considered the leading writer in the movement. Among the positions he held prior to 1941 were minister of state, director-general of the Department of Fine Arts, secretary-general of the Royal Institute, chairman of the Broadcasting Committee of Thailand, and lecturer of political history at the University of Moral

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and Political Sciences. 4/ Wichit later became the leader of the Thammathipat Party (Right is Might Party), a strongly nationalistic party and firm supporter of Phibun Songgram. 5/ Wichit became minister of finance in 1951, 6/ but was dropped from the Cabinet in 1952 because of a scandal involving rice shipments. 7/ In July 1952 he was appointed ambassador to India. 8/ He is still very much on the scene, and may be as Pan-Thaist as ever.

M. Siviram, who wrote Mekong Clash and Far East Crisis in 1941, in the same vein as Wichit's book, has produced several other works on this subject. He is believed to be in India at present.

Direck Chayanam, who often lectured on Pan-Thaism in 1940, was then deputy minister of foreign affairs to Phibun. He has since served as ambassador to London (in 1947) 9/ and as delegate to the General Assembly of the United Nations. 10/ In 1948 he was [REDACTED] the leader of an abortive attempt by the Thai Navy to seize the reins of government, but this charge has not been proven. 11/ In 1950 he contributed to a liberal magazine with a definite pro-Communist slant, using the pen name Dajne. 12/ [REDACTED] of 1952 lists him among the leaders of the Free Thai group headed by ex-Premier Pridi. 13/ In March 1953 it was reported that he was going to the United States for an eight-month lecture tour on Buddhism and on

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Thai-US relations. 14/ How large a part he is playing in current Pan-Thai moves is not known.

Major General Prayun Phamonmontri, deputy minister of finance, was, and still is, a close friend and strong supporter of Phibun. From 1940 until its abolition at the end of the war, Prayun was head of the Yuvachon, 15/ a pro Pan-Thaist youth group patterned after the Hitler Jugend movement in Germany. 16/ He is still quite active on the Thai political scene and in 1952 came to the US to negotiate a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. 17/

As stated above, the Yuvachon, and its girls' branch, the Yuvanari, were abolished after the war. For lack of sufficient support, an attempted revival failed in 1948. Many former members of this group are believed to be in the army now. 18/

Another prominent group supporting claims against France in 1940 was the Lu'at Thai (Thai Blood Group), an ultra-nationalist group that advocated retaking Laos and Cambodia by force. 19/ The group was inactive during the war but reappeared in 1946. 20/ Nothing is known of its current activities, if indeed it is still in existence.

There may well be other groups which either were or now are engaged in Pan-Thai activities, but those mentioned above are the only ones research disclosed.

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II. INDICATIONS OF THE CURRENT EXISTENCE OF A  
PAN-THAI MOVEMENT

No evidence of the existence of a Pan-Thai Movement as such appears at present. However, the former leaders of the movement, which was at its strongest in 1940, are still on the scene. They are still prominent, some even more powerful than before, and there is no indication that they have changed their views. Phibun Songgram, premier, and leader of the movement in 1940, once more heads the government. He and his cohorts have been variously described as ultra-nationalistic, chauvinistic or opportunistic. Two tests of any possible revival of this movement are now looming on the horizon -- Viet Minh activity in Laos and Cambodia, and the creation of a Thai Autonomous Region in southern Yunnan province by the Chinese Communist Government.

Recent reports also indicate the possibility of an independent Shan States movement which could be connected with the Pan-Thaist movement. However, it seems unlikely that there is any connection between the two. Shan independence movements seem to be three-pronged, with plans for such a move being laid to the Chinese Nationalists, to the Chinese Communists or to the Shan leaders themselves. [REDACTED]

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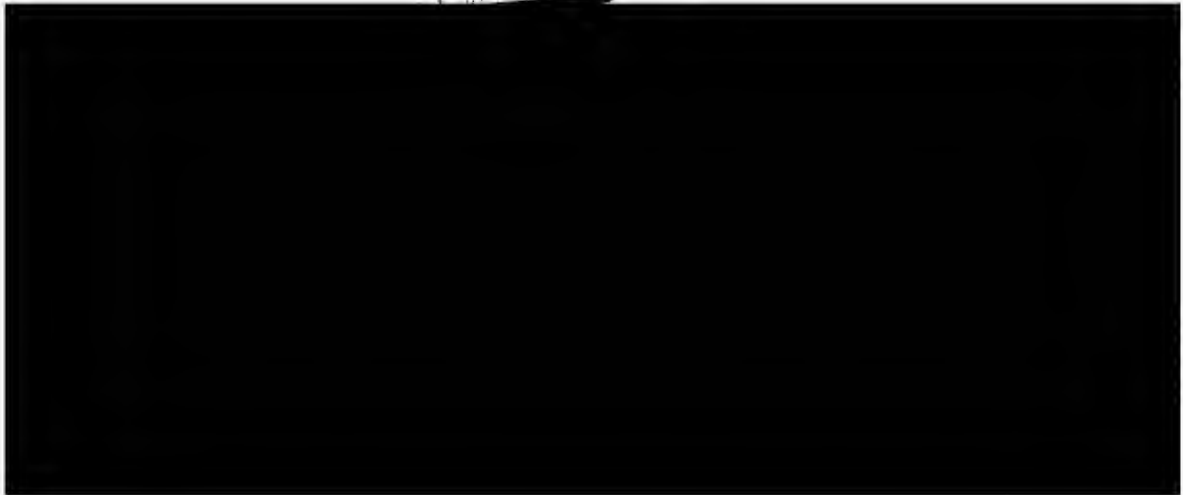
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As stated above, there is no known connection between this movement and the work of the Pan-Thaists, though such action would be expected to be a step towards the goal of Pan-Thaists seeking to reunite the Shan States with Thailand.

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A recent Embassy report from Rangoon makes this comment in relation to the Shan States problem: "Current Chinese Communist organization of a Thai linguistic state in Yunnan augurs ill for the Shan States, which are racially and linguistically identical with the Northern Thai, Laotian, and Yunnan 'Thai' peoples." 25/ What effect this may have on the Pan-Thaist movement is not certain.

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Several items from recent Thai publications give the following versions of the situation created by establishment of the new state in Yunnan.

From the Weekly Press Summary of the Thai Press 22-28 February 1953:

"A New Thai State," editorial

February 26

Sayamrat Weekly (Neutral)

From the New China News Agency comes the news that a Thai Autonomous State has been created in Yunnan, Southern China. There are forty-seven nationalities in this new state, but the largest national group is the Thais, who number about two hundred thousand. For this reason the new state is called a Thai state to conform with the racial name of the majority of the population. The Capital City of the new state is the town of Cheli, and the first prime minister of this state is a person name that is Thai as Plack Phibunsongkram.

The main policy of the government of this state is to get rid of American and Chinese Nationalist influences within the state's own territories. The policy is both natural and logical, since the policy of a newly created red government must naturally be identical with that of its red creator, and an "autonomous" state which is only a small part of the Communist Empire cannot but reflect the will of the dictator party. The creation of a new state is in fact mere routine work behind the iron or bamboo curtain. It can have no significance other than propaganda.

To give significance to Mao's new plaything is tantamount to giving importance where importance is not due. The word Thai is after all a racial name, and the Thai people in Yunnan or elsewhere have as much right to it as we have. Our racial pride should make us glad that a new Thai state has come into being, if only we could

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force ourselves to give credence to the word "autonomous" which is laconically attached to the state name. For us to be otherwise agitated by the birth of this new state is to admit our own defeat by the communist propaganda weapon. As China is a country that comprises many racial groups, scattered over her vast regions, we may expect in the future many more formation of new states under different racial names. The time for us to be really excited would be when Red China creates a new autonomous state called America.

It is at a time like this that we look back upon the name "Siam" with a sense of nostalgia. For this is indeed a name that the communists cannot tamper with. The change, however, has already been made, and the name of Thailand has at last endeared itself to us through the process of constant contact and acquired taste. We sincerely hope that the government of Thailand will not follow the precedent of changing the name of the "Peace Villa," to avoid the repugnant Communist Peace Movement, and change the name of the country back again to Siam. For that would indeed be another mark added to the communist score board in this deep-freeze war between opposite ideologies.

"Column for Reflection," by "Thoert Tham"

February 28

Khao Phap Rai Wan  
(police controlled)

We should be interested in the news reports of the establishment of the "Free Thai State" in Yunnan, China. We should study this move carefully. The establishment of the Free Thai State has features along the lines of the Soviet administration. China today has an administrative regime along the same lines as the Soviet pattern and is one of the patterns of the federation states. The administrative regime of many countries, such as the United States and Switzerland, is like the pattern of the federated states, but the Soviet Federation differs from the federation of the United States and Switzerland. Besides "federal republics," there are also "autonomous republics,"

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"autonomous regions" and "national territories." All these autonomous republics, regions and territories are represented in the Soviet Government in the same way that federal governments are represented in the national or central government.

Hence, the establishment of this Free Thai State may mean the establishment of the "Autonomous Republic of the Thai Nationality" in Yunnan. The administration of this autonomous Thai republic must be under the control of the federal republic as well as the republic of the Chinese people.

In "Today's Column" -- "White Thai, Red Thai," by "X-ray"

February 28

Kiattisak (nationalist)

On the establishment of the Free Thai State and the formation of the Government of Chao Khun Sin, who is Prime Minister, Field Marshal Phibun Songkram forecasted that political refugees from Thailand may join the administration of this country. The Field Marshal's forecast would be the same as the general forecast. This is very important for us to predict that when political refugees from Thailand cooperate with the Free Thai Government, the policy of the Free Thai Government can be antagonistic also to the Government of Thailand, especially when this state and this government are established and supported by Mao Tze Tung. The Field Marshal stated that he has referred this matter to the National Defense Council for study and that steps must be taken to prepare for the aggression of the Free Thai.

The Field Marshal further stated that this move affects Thailand because our Constitution provides for only one country. This causes the Field Marshal much anxiety over whether future political developments would take the path of North Indochina and South Indochina; North Burma and South Burma; North India and South India or not depend on the role of the Government of Chao Khun Sin.

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One thing which cannot be avoided is that the world may, instead of calling us simply "Thai," may call us "White Thai" and "Red Thai" as China is called "Red China" and "White China" or in the case of Korea, the Red and White Koreans. (Summary)

"The Free Thai Government," editorial

February 28

Nangsu Phim Chao  
(police controlled)

There are news reports that a Free Thai Government has been established in Sipsong Chuthai or in the province which is under the sovereignty of China and under the support of Communist China. It can be considered the comedy of the Communists because the country which has sovereignty (Red China) over the minority group has established this minority group into an independent country to create political unrest in foreign countries. This move cannot but be called an aggressive measure because it is not known that the minority group (Free Thai) has resorted to arms to drive the Chinese away in order to establish itself as an independent state. If the Constitution of Red China provides for the minority group to be an independent state, then the free state ought to thank Red China and this measure would have no bearing on Thailand.

Geographically the establishment of this Free Thai State may be a disadvantage to Thailand because the boundaries are not adjoining one another. But if the Free Thai State installed by the Reds want to join Thailand, then prior consent must be sought through the National Assembly according to the Constitution. According to the present Constitution Thailand is one and indivisible. The present Thailand which is recognized by international law is a genuine Thailand. No one (by whatever means) can separate the administration of Thailand into two or three states; and no country can divide Thailand into two or three states. If such a step is taken, whether by an individual or country, it means that the person or country responsible must be definitely suppressed.

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Suppose the mentioned fake Thai state turns a communist satellite and is given arms support by the communists to aggress against the Kingdom of Thailand, then a foreign army is aggressing against the sovereignty of Thailand, and every Thai citizen should fight to suppress this attack.

It is more of a joke if it is referred to as a government without a country, because persons who organized this fake government were not driven from Thailand when they legally assumed power, but were driven out because they were defeated by the force of a coup d'etat. The condition of this government is not the same as the governments without a country during World War II established in England because their countries were at war with the enemy and they had to retreat. Hence, the Free State in Red China has no meaning to Thailand. (Condensed)

From the Weekly Press Summary of the Thai Press 1-7 March 1953:

"Another Thailand for Choice," by Kukrit Pramote

March 2

Sayamrat (neutral)

There is a rather exciting piece of news at the moment, and because of it, if you should ask a strange question: Are there two Thailands? - the correct answer you would get is "Right."

For there is this Thailand that we know as our country and there is the Thai Autonomous State just created in Yunnan by the Chinese Government at Peking. Exciting, isn't it? But let's not jump to conclusions and interpret the occurrence as something to our disadvantage. From the available information concerning this new Thai land, I gather that it is not unlike the situation in Chiengrai where, according to a book written by an MP, the Thai live among scores of other peoples. The same goes for China, but among those "other peoples" in China, it seems the Thai, evidently descendants of those who did not join our own forbears in their flight from Chu Kad Ling, are the largest group.

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To set up a new state, calling it "autonomous" while granting it no real freedom, is a most common form of government practiced by the Soviet Union. The Peking government, for all we know, is trying their best to sovietize their country according to the Russian pattern. There are many "autonomous" states in Russia, named after the peoples who live there, theoretically free to choose their own ways of life, but actually are under complete control of the Kremlin or of Stalin himself. That Mao Tse Tung has established a new state within China can hardly be called a surprising move.

Actually, the Thai State is the second one to emerge behind the Bamboo Curtain, the first being Tibet. Mao Tse Tung's reason for naming the state after us probably lies in his desire to please the Thai people in south China, rather than to plan an aggression against this "State of Strange Autonomy" which is our home. The Thai people, in whichever country they happen to find themselves, usually have a way of holding on to the name Thai as something greater than any doctrine. China has been trying for many centuries to transform the Thai people into good Chinamen, sometimes by persuasion, but the stubborn Thai have managed to remain themselves and even continue to speak the language, which can be easily understood by their brothers in this peninsula. To this day, they still call the Chinese their "guest" who has come for a visit only to stay for good; they never regard the Chinese as the owner of the land. Continental China is not the only place where the Thai people may be found. On the Island of Hainan, homes belonging to the Thai occupy the middle part of the island, while the Hainan Chinese live near the shore. We Thai in This Thailand are always impressed by the fact that the Hainan Chinese can say "dee" and not turning (it) into "lee" like other Chinese, and like to think that the Thai in Hainan has had something to do with this linguistic achievement, however minor it is.

Take for another example the case of the Thai people living in Indochina. There is a region to the north of Hanoi, a real "Muang Thai" it is, for the lot of Thai people living there have made it so. Now, take Ho Chi Minh, no matter what you say, the fact remains that he has won the respect

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of a large number of the Annamites. But one of the peoples in Indochina who refuse to cooperate with him is the Thai. In fact, they are quite actively helping the French fight him and his Viet-Minh troops. This does not mean they like being a French colony, but they do it because they do not wish to be ruled by the Annamites. The Peking government in Yunnan may have occasion to find this Thai trait a serious stumbling block to their plans. An average Thai anywhere will believe it when told he is "free" or "democratic," but try to tell him he is a "communist" and you'll run into trouble. He'll deny it with all his might, even taking pains to have his denial recorded and broadcast.

The premier of this new free Thai State is Chao Khun Sin, a true Thai name, as true as any around here which have not been influenced by India. But let me hasten to warn the readers not to let this name mislead them into thinking that someone here in our midst has made good his escape and joined the communists in establishing the new government. Such a belief would be entirely unfounded and would unnecessarily cause hard feelings among several quarters. It is very logical that there should be leaders with Thai names in a Thai community. Such names as Chao Khun Sin, Chao Khun Keo, Chao Wanna and a host of others are quite common not only in north Thailand, and north Burma, but also in China itself. And if the premier's name is Chao Khun Sin, we could guess what the names of the cabinet members would sound like. The Minister of Finance, for instance, might be someone named Chao Kampan, the Minister of Education, Tao San Pom, the Minister of Economic Affairs, Nan Bunkerd, and so forth. Such names as Boripan, Phromyothi, or Worakan Bancha, probably would not appear at all, being definitely Indian in origin and used widely only by the Thai in this country. Should Chao Khun Sin himself ever come to take up residence here, he might after a certain period change his name to "Thanarat" or something along the same line. But I don't think we have to worry about that at the moment, or to fear that some Thai from here has gone there to help in the making of the new state.



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Come to think of it, you cannot help feeling comfortable over the idea of having another state for the Thai people. For there are some around here who subscribe to the communist doctrine, some who do not like America, some who do not like the present government, and even some who do not like the Prime Minister Field Marshal Phibun Songkram. Now these people should feel a sense of relief, and exhilaration too, that there is a new Thailand more "progressive" than the old, to which they could go if they choose. There, one could freely become a communist and nothing else. There the government has announced its determination to get rid of every American influence. There one finds an entirely new government headed by Chao Khun Sin and not Field Marshal Plaek. As for those not quite so "progressive," or those who like their steps forward and backward in the manner of doing a samba, or still those who do not dislike anyone and are loyal fans of the Field Marshal's like this writer, they will very likely choose to remain here and consider themselves lucky not to have to dodge bullets whose source and destination would be unknown to them.

And as a Thai people, we should also be glad to know that China has thought it necessary to create a state for the Thai within its own boundaries. Such an action is a testimony to the hardiness of the Thai race, an assurance that no one may swallow with ease. We should (offer) our congratulations and our best wishes to those Thai in that other land, and be proud of them too, for although "autonomy" and "freedom" are now but words for them; who can tell whether one day they might not become truly autonomous and free. When that day comes, let us be ready to welcome them with both arms, for they will be Thai as we are Thai. Political doctrines may be changed - democracy today, communism tomorrow, and vice versa, but to be Thai is to remain Thai, as the forefathers of Chao Khun Sin and Field Marshal Plaek have been for six thousand years, and as their children will be for all the years to come. It can't be changed easily like a coat or a doctrine.

With this thought in mind, I wish there would be more of these Thai Autonomous States - in Hainan, Indochina, north Burma, Assam and wherever there are Thai

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people living and working with the Thai spirit. Then perhaps peace will come to this part of the world, for Thai would not fight Thai, and perhaps in this Thailand, too, there will be less struggling and killing for the sake of power, for then the quota of premiership and other high positions will be so enlarged as to satisfy more yearning souls.



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9. Bangkok Post, 24 April 1947. 25X1X6
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11. [REDACTED]
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